

## Workers rewarded for improving Utah's air quality

**Environment » Utahns ditch cars for six weeks, save 1.7 million pounds in emissions.**

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Along with corporate teams at Rio Tinto, Zions Bank and O.C. Tanner, a scrappy gang of eco-conscious twenty-somethings -- the "Feral Chihuahuas" -- were recognized Saturday for their efforts to reduce transportation pollution, the biggest single contributor to the Wasatch Front's poor air quality.

For six weeks, the 30-member group carpooled, tele-commuted and used flex-time at work to avoid driving on bad air days. On errands they walked, rode bikes and took the bus, saving a combined 866 gallons of gas and 32,679 pounds of air-fouling emissions.

"The pollution here is so visible. And it has immediate and long-term effects for all of us," said Jen Milner, who named her team after a Chihuahua rescue operation she runs.

The do-gooders represent the power of viral messaging, say organizers of Utah's "Clean the Air Challenge." They used Facebook and Twitter to hook participants.

But the true test may be reaching non-activists. The challenge claims to have averted 110,720 car trips and 1 million miles for a reduction of 1.7 million pounds of emissions, just shy of its 1.8 million pound goal.

"We hope this is just the beginning," said Salt Lake County Mayor Peter Corroon at the Pioneer Park awards ceremony. He urged Utahns to continue logging their eco-miles, though there will be no more prizes.

Saturday's winners walked away with free bikes, 18 holes of golf, lunch with Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker and other giveaways.

Grand-prize winner Heidi Schubert gets a week's use of a Chevy Impala that runs on compressed natural gas. The car will come in handy for the 40-year-old who is five months pregnant and says traveling by bike has "become more challenging." Proof that one person can make a difference,

Schubert reduced her commutes by 173 miles, conserving 8 gallons of gas and 297 pounds of emissions.

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Clean The Air Challenge winners

Utah's "Clean the Air Challenge" was a collaboration of state, county and city governments, businesses and faith-based groups to encourage Utahns to cut energy consumption, ease traffic congestion and improve air quality. The winners are:

Most Pounds of Emissions Saved » Rio Tinto

Most Trips Saved » Zions Bank

Most Participants » Zoo Crew (Hogle Zoo)

Best Integration of TravelWise Strategies (including use of public transit, carpooling, active transportation, teleworking, flexible workweeks and trip chaining) » Feral Chihuahuas

2009 Corporate Role Model » O.C. Tanner

Grand prize winners:

Most Pounds of Emissions Saved » Tami Jannelli

Most Trips Saved » Soren Simonsen, Salt Lake City Councilman, District 7

Most Consistent, Gold Level » Heidi Schubert

Most Consistent, Silver Level » Debby Vanetti

Most Consistent, Bronze Level » Russel Boltz

To learn more about the Clean Air Challenge go to:

[www.cleartheairchallenge.org](http://www.cleartheairchallenge.org)

[www.cleartheairchallenge.org/blog](http://www.cleartheairchallenge.org/blog)

[www.facebook.com/cleartheairchallenge](https://www.facebook.com/cleartheairchallenge)

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